

Sandoval set to slash \$20M from mental health

By Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette-Journal

Gov. Brian Sandoval has proposed slashing the state's chronically underfunded mental health budget by \$20 million—including eliminating 112 positions statewide—arguing that the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act means more mentally ill clients can find care in private hospitals.

But advocates for the mentally ill say even with Medicaid coverage, patients have difficulty accessing private care in Reno, citing a shortage in psychiatrists in private practice, too-few psychiatrists accepting new patients and a shortage of in-patient treatment beds.

Even more troubling for them is the prospect that Congress has promised to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which means all of the mentally ill clients who now have insurance under Medicaid could lose coverage at the same time the state is shrinking a key safety net.

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